

were Terns, *Sterna aurantia* Gray, the River Tern, *Sterna melanogaster* Temmink, the Black-bellied Tern and *Sterna albifrons*, the Little Tern; the Indian Pratincole, *Glareola lactea*, Temminck; the Ring Plover, *Charadrius dubius* Scopoli; the Spur-winged Plover, *Hoplopterus duvaucellii*; several other species came to feed but were not resident, such as storks, egrets, ibis; rather unusual were a large colony of sarus cranes which fed for the most part on the bare wheat and gram fields, and on the edge of the river. These birds all disappeared on the break of the rains.

HOSHANGABAD, C.P.

C. HEWETSON,

November 11, 1943.

I.F.S.

VI.—LATE BREEDING OF THE COMMON HOUSE CROW (*CORVUS SPLENDENS SPLENDENS*).

On the 6th October last my attention was drawn by the persistent cries of a house crow (*Corvus splendens splendens*) which were being responded to by what sounded like the raucous call of a young koel (*Eudynamis scolopaceus scotopaceus*). I spotted the two birds and found that my guess was correct. The next day I noticed the crow feeding the koel. It was fully fledged but the tell-tale brownish spots left no doubt about its age. It could have left the nest only recently. According to Stuart Baker, *C. splendens splendens* breeds in May, June and July in its north-western range (*Fauna of British India*, Birds, Vol. i, p. 33). It seems therefore unusual for a Delhi house crow to hatch a koel so late. I wonder whether the continuity of monsoon conditions has any thing to do with this late breeding. A pair of mynas (*Acridotheres tristis tristis*) have also hatched their young this year late in September in my bungalow. The chick left the nest on the 3rd October for the first time. But young mynas of the same age are found all over this place following the parents and clamouring to be fed.

IMPERIAL RECORD DEPARTMENT,

NEW DELHI.

S. N. SEN.

October 13, 1943.

VII.—ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE RUFOUS-BELLIED CRESTED TIT (*LOPHOPHANES RUBIDIVENTRIS*) IN THE SIMLA HILLS.

As the information regarding the distribution of this rare Tit in the *Fauna*, 2nd ed., Vol. i, p. 85, is extremely scanty it is worth recording that a specimen, 'one of a pair', was obtained by Mr. H. C. Smith, of the Burma Forest Service, on April 25, 1943, at Kalabagh, 11,000 ft. on the 'Chor' (sometimes spelt 'Chaur')

mountain in Jubbal State. This is probably somewhat contiguous to the locality from which the Pinwall specimens, as cited in the *Fauna*, 2nd ed., came from.

Mr. Smith very kindly presented this specimen to me which is now in my collection.

SIMLA, 1943.

A. E. JONES.

VIII.—FOOD OF THE WHITE-BREASTED KINGFISHER (*HALCYON SMYRNENSIS FUSCA*).

Writing of the habits of the Indian White-breasted Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis fusca*) Stuart Baker says: 'Its principal articles of diet are undoubtedly grasshoppers and locusts, but will eat almost any living thing not too large to swallow' (*Birds, Fauna of British India*, Vol. iv, p. 210). I hardly imagined that this kingfisher preyed upon small birds until I saw it actually seize and eat one (on December 6, 1943). I could not identify its victim, but it looked like a North Indian White-eye. The bird was still alive when the kingfisher carried it to its perch and a few knocks against the perching branch put a quietus to it. It seemed to be too large to be swallowed at a gulp and the kingfisher went on striking it continuously for twenty minutes or more in its characteristic manner. It would shift the body from the head to the tail before starting each fresh set of knocking. So far as I could observe, repeated knocking did not perceptibly reduce the size of the prey. Some of the contour feathers were of course dislodged but the tail and wing feathers were not affected. Most probably the meat and the bones lost their toughness before the body was finally swallowed head foremost. The tail feathers stuck out for a few seconds and the kingfisher flew to a neighbouring tree and began to sun itself without apparently feeling any need of a drink.

NEW DELHI,
December 7, 1943.

S. N. SEN,
Keeper of the Imperial Records.

IX.—GREEN PIGEONS IN SWAMP.

I read with interest Major Phythian-Adams' note on Green Pigeons in a Swamp. While passing through the Amring Forest Reserve on the banks of the Kopili River in Assam (Nowgong District) I came on a fairly large area of *lalang* grass and shrubs containing several pools to which elephants were frequent visitors. The soil was sandy and there were several bare patches of sandy clay and mud where barking deer, sambar, etc. had left many trails—in other words a sort of salt lick.

On trees around and in the area there were hundreds of Imperial pigeon, and many other kinds of pigeon and doves. From one of the sandy patches, a fairly damp spot, I flushed about a half a dozen green pigeon of some sort. I noticed it because I have never before seen a green pigeon on the ground except for the *Punai Tanah* of Malaya.